

10 FAM 500 GRANTS MANAGEMENT

10 FAM 510 GRANT REVIEW GUIDELINES

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

10 FAM 511 GENERAL

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

a. The Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs provides institutional grants and cooperative agreements to promote the long-term foreign policy objectives of the United States by promoting mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of foreign countries. Grants are not awarded for the purpose of promoting the short-term foreign policy goals of a particular Administration. Consistent with the above, the Bureau seeks to be responsive to the needs and interests of the field posts and Fulbright Commissions/ foundations as articulated in their annual country plans, as well as to the broad private sector constituencies in the United States engaged in international educational and cultural exchange.

b. The Bureau's broad range of activities suggests the need for flexible guidelines addressing its various program categories. Although application guidelines and review procedures may vary depending on type of program, the following comprises a general Bureau structure for application and review for grants and cooperative agreements, as well as amendments which add funds. Additional specific procedures for each office and for special competitions and special programs and program categories, developed in consultation with the Assistant Secretary, must be consistent with these guidelines.

10 FAM 511 ELIGIBILITY

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

a. Academic and cultural institutions, exchange-of-persons and other not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply for grant support. Grant activities must be consistent with and authorized by the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act, as amended, and must comply with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' legislative charter, which states:

"The President, or his designee, shall insure that all programs under the authority of the Bureau shall maintain their non-political character and shall be balanced and representative of the diversity of U.S. political, social and

cultural life. The President, or his designee, shall insure that academic and cultural programs under the authority of the Bureau shall maintain their scholarly integrity and shall meet the highest standards of academic excellence or artistic achievement".

b. Organizations should demonstrate a proven record (at least four years) of successful implementation of international exchange, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements. Pilot grants not to exceed \$60,000 (total Department funding) may be awarded to otherwise eligible organizations with less experience in international exchange.

c. All programs and projects should conform with other applicable Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs guidelines, as well as cognizant legal, reporting, and compliance requirements, and are subject to the requirements of the contracting officer. Agreements must be executed prior to the start date.

d. The Bureau seeks to promote competition and balance in its discretionary grant-making and strives to avoid exclusivity. Programs will be evaluated by the Bureau and, on occasion, by independent outside experts.

10 FAM 512 APPLICATION REVIEW PROCEDURES

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

a. Basic grants and cooperative agreements to long-term, traditional agencies implementing basic exchange programs (identified jointly by the Bureau program office and the office of the Assistant Secretary, consistent with guidance provided by the Assistant Secretary) are solicited and reviewed annually according to criteria developed by the program, budget, and contracts offices, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the relevant regional bureau as necessary. Grants and cooperative agreements falling into this category are jointly identified by the responsible Bureau program office and the office of the Assistant Secretary.

b. Should special circumstances (e.g., the Congressional budget cycle, the planning cycles of academic institutions or Fulbright Commissions), preclude the review of the complete proposal for basic, traditional exchange activities in advance of the commencement of the fiscal year, and should "start-up" funds be needed in order to fulfill basic purposes of the Fulbright-Hays Act, grants or cooperative agreements processed consistent with these guidelines may be written. Such actions should generally not exceed one quarter of the prior year "base," and are subject to standard procedures for solicitation and for review by the Bureau senior management panel (see below).

10 FAM 513 GRANTS PROGRAMS

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

For these programs, specific application and proposal guidelines are developed by the program office and the Office of the Assistant Secretary. Each complete application includes:

(1) A standard Bureau cover sheet, other required federal forms (e.g., "drug-free workplace," debarment, "lobbying" certification [if applicable] and EEO compliance forms).

(2) A copy of the organization's Charter.

(3) A detailed narrative proposal describing in detail the need for the program, its objectives, proposed participants, selection criteria, proposed activities, itineraries, follow-up, and plan for assessment of project; for solicited projects, issues to be addressed in the proposal should be provided by the program office in its application guidance.

(4) A detailed budget, complying with the requirements of the Bureau's Executive office and the contracting officer, including specification of cost-sharing and in-kind contributions as appropriate.

(5) Curriculum vitae of project staff.

(6) germane letters of endorsement.

(7) The organization's most current C.P.A. financial statement (one per institution per year).

10 FAM 514 COMPETITION REQUIREMENTS

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

Competitions are announced through Requests for Proposals (RFPs) published in the **Federal Register**, and by invitation to selected institutions when highly specialized expertise is required. Consistent with these guidelines, each program office develops and revises as necessary specific guidance for its general and special competitions, including detailed descriptions of solicited programs and clear criteria for the assessment of proposals by Bureau panels and, on occasion and in addition, by expert, outside reviewers. For highly specialized competitions, independent outside peer panels may be convened. Criteria should in all cases be consistent with established Bureau standards and cognizant authorities. (See below for general Bureau criteria.)

b. Before requesting proposals from outside agencies or issuing RFPs, program offices:

(1) Submit brief description of proposed activity/ project/ program, list of program agencies to be solicited, rationale for proposed institutions, and copy of proposed solicitation document to Bureau Grants Coordinator for review and to Assistant Secretary for review and clearance.

(2) Clear Requests for Proposals (RFP) and solicitation drafts with: ECA/EX/PM, ECA/EX/G, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary; and, as appropriate, with regional bureaus, and L

(3) May, once the above clearances have been received, then issue solicitation and hold discussions with potential applicants concerning Bureau application procedures.

10 FAM 515 INTERNAL REVIEW PROCEDURES

10 FAM 515.1 Timing

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

Program offices should generally allow approximately eight weeks from formal receipt of complete proposal packages for the analysis, review, decision and award process.

10 FAM 515.2 Staff Contact

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

Following the application deadline, there will be no substantive staff comment or discussion with the applicant concerning the content of the proposal or the internal Bureau assessment. Following the Assistant Secretary's decision, and with ECA/EX/G clearance for grant/ cooperative agreement approvals, the applicant will be notified in writing of the outcome. For disapprovals, ECA/EX/G clearance is not required.

Note: The requirements stated in this section do not preclude discussion of technical requirements or the various required compliance forms either before or after the application deadline, as necessary. They do not apply to negotiations of grants or cooperative agreements for traditional, long-term programs.

10 FAM 515.3 Receipt of Proposals

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

a. Upon receipt, each grant, cooperative agreement and amendment requests will be entered by ECA/EX/PM into the Bureau electronic tracking system. Once assigned a number, the respective program office will provide

continuous updating as internal reviews and clearances are submitted and completed.

b. The program office will ensure that each proposal will:

- (1) Be assigned an action officer and a tracking number.
- (2) Be reviewed for technical eligibility (ECA/EX/PM is ultimately responsible for determining technical eligibility).
- (3) Be acknowledged.
- (4) Work with ECA/EX/PM to establish a panel date, if eligible for further review.
- (5) Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

c. The panel's recommendations for clarification or additional information must be addressed by the applicant prior to the Assistant Secretary's decision.

d. For ineligible proposals, a letter to the applicant stating the reason for ineligibility should be prepared for the Office Director's signature.

10 FAM 515.4 Program Office Responsibilities

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

The program office preparing a proposal for panel review should:

- (1) Certify that all application elements have been received.
- (2) Distribute to ECA/EX/PM in all cases; as necessary, distribute to regional bureaus, to Office of the Legal Adviser, and to contracting officer for preliminary review.
- (3) Include for panel review relevant internal and external assessments and evaluation studies, and the solicitation (including review criteria) to which the proposal responds.
- (4) Consistent with Bureau policy statement on program officer responsibilities for panel, prepare staff analysis of proposal (comments on apparent "strengths" and "weaknesses," based on general Bureau and specific competition criteria; (for traditional, long-term program grants and cooperative agreements, analysis should relate to responsiveness to solicitation requirements); information on track record; program staff budget analysis; and any relevant additional data);
- (5) Forward proposal, comments of other elements, office analysis and blank review sheets to panel members at least one week prior to scheduled meeting; provide completed analyses to relevant area offices.

10 FAM 515.5 Exceptions

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

Exceptions to the internal review requirements must be approved in writing by the Assistant Secretary. Project proposals must, in all cases, comply with all cognizant OMB and other requirements (including those of the contracting officer) prior to funding.

10 FAM 516 PANELS

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

a. Panels are scheduled by the program office in consultation with the Bureau Grants Coordinator.

b. Each technically eligible proposed grant or cooperative agreement shall be reviewed by an advisory panel of which a majority of the voting members shall be career employees from other than the grant-making office or geographic bureau corresponding to the project's location, and for which voting members must be present.

b. Panels:

(1) Includes non-voting representatives of Bureau program office, relevant regional bureaus, budget, contract and Legal Adviser's offices (if applicable).

(2) Scheduled by program office or ECA/EX/PM.

(3) Chaired by Bureau Grants Coordinator (ECA/EX/PM) or designated alternate.

10 FAM 516.1 Minutes

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

Minutes, taken by program office staff, should provide a detailed report on the substance of the discussion, and recommendations. Participants, voting and non-voting, should be listed on the introductory page. In the text, individual participants should not be directly identified with their remarks. Instead, the discussion section should identify panelists as "Panelist A..." or "The first panelist...."

10 FAM 516.2 Senior Management Panels

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

In addition to grant review panels described in preceding sections, the Bureau Grants Coordinator and Deputy Assistant Secretary, in consultation

with the Assistant Secretary, designate, consistent with the above standards, a pool of "senior management panelists" of senior officers familiar with long-term Bureau programs. These panelists are called upon to review administrative budget actions for traditional, long-term programs, and, on occasion, other elements of the proposal. In addition, senior management panels may be convened by ECA/EX/PM, at the request of the program office, for modest grants and amendments (less than \$10,000), and to review proposals for exceptional actions such as Congressional "earmarks."

10 FAM 516.3 Other Panels

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

Special panels, including experts in areas relevant to the competition, selected consistent with Bureau Charter requirements, may, with approval of the Office of the Assistant Secretary, be convened for discrete, specialized competitions. Procedures for the overall review must be consistent with guidelines standards.

10 FAM 516.4 Panel Responsibilities

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

a. Each panel member:

(1) Comments on quality of grant requests with specific reference to consistency with established standards and criteria (general Bureau criteria, below, and specific office criteria and/or criteria for the specific competition), and the Bureau's legislative mandate; submits written voting sheet for each proposal.

(2) Recommends approval/ disapproval, additional staff work, including modest, feasible "conditions" and/or modifications such as additional outside review of the application.

b. At the conclusion of panel consideration of each proposal, the Bureau Grants Coordinator summarizes for the minutes follow-up actions for various elements, including recommendation for additional expert outside review.

10 FAM 516.5 Office Responsibilities Following Panel

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

Within one week of panel review, program office:

(1) Coordinates follow-up actions of various elements and prepares a package for the Assistant Secretary requesting concurrence with the panel/office recommendations.

(2) Following Assistant Secretary's approval of the concurrence package authorization, contacts applicant for response to panel questions, if any. (Note: Such contacts must emphasize that no decision has been made, and should provide no information about the status or substance of the review.)

(3) Summarizes for the file the institution's response to panel questions.

(4) Prepares file for Assistant Secretary with the Congressional Notification memorandum, memorandum to Grants Division including specific reporting requirements, copies of proposal (including required compliance forms), panel review sheets, minutes, area comments, outside review (if applicable) and, for proposals recommended for "approval" by either panel or office, statement of applicant's response to questions and budget review. In rare instances, as necessary, comments from the Office of the Legal Adviser and Bureau Budget Office may be requested and included in the package.

(5) Forwards grant file to Assistant Secretary through Bureau Grants Coordinator. Special procedures for large competitions may be approved by the Assistant Secretary.

10 FAM 517 CERTIFICATION AND DECISION

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

The Office of the Executive Director is responsible for the following:

(1) Log into the grants program assistant files and Bureau tracking system.

(2) Certification by Bureau Grants Coordinator for consistency with procedural requirements.

(3) Forward to Deputy Assistant Secretary or to Assistant Secretary for approval/disapproval. The Deputy or Assistant Secretary may request additional, expert, outside review, coordinated on his behalf by the Bureau Grants Coordinator in consultation with the Office Director. For decisions contrary to the advisory panel recommendation, the Assistant Secretary notes for the file the rationale for the decision.

(4) Send copy of signed concurrence memo to program office.

(5) Submit Congressional notification to cognizant Congressional Committees for 15-day notification. For ECA/PE/V group projects notification is submitted annually prior to the beginning of each fiscal year of regional and multi-regional projects projected for that year.

(6) Forward file to ECA/EX/RM/ECE for final processing and conveyance to ECA/EX/G.

(7) Issue "release of funds" upon expiration of 15-day notification period.

10 FAM 518 NOTIFICATION OF APPLICANT

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

Following the Assistant Secretary's written decision, applicants whose proposals were not funded should be informed, in writing, by the program office. For approved grant requests, office directors may send their own letters in addition to those of the contracting officer. Final authority to make grants and cooperative agreements, including all amendments, resides with the contracting officer.

10 FAM 519 SPECIAL PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REVIEW PROCEDURES

10 FAM 519.1 Cultural Programs, Office of Citizen Exchanges

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

Certain grants and cooperative agreements in support of visual and performing arts activities of the Office of Citizen Exchanges are subject to the general requirements of the contracting officer, and must include all legally required forms, compliances, etc. Following negotiation with relevant posts concerning dates, itinerary, etc., the specific terms of a final agreement are negotiated. Program staff prepares the final file for the Assistant Secretary and the necessary documents for the contracting officer. Following the Assistant Secretary's final approval, the contracting officer awards the grant or cooperative agreement. Grants and cooperative agreements not processed under this provision must adhere to Bureau-wide guidelines and procedures.

10 FAM 519.2 International Visitor Grants Administrative Process for Multi-Regional and Regional Projects (Group Projects)

(TL:PEC-01; 10-01-1999)

a. Multi-regional and regional project themes are developed in response to Department goals and themes and to country plans submitted by each post abroad. When the annual list is finalized it is sent to the Bureau Grants Coordinator to forward for Congressional notification, and the office files are started for each project.

b. Project concept papers are written in support of each project theme. Concept papers contain the following guidelines:

- (1) Project dates;
- (2) Communication goals;
- (3) Type of participants desired;
- (4) Summary of program objectives;
- (5) Listing of all projects, date proposal must be submitted, and guidelines for proposal and budget preparation are reviewed and made available to all institutions interested in bidding on projects at the beginning of each fiscal year or, as is the case of new institutions, as requested.
- (6) Proposals are logged into the grants tracking system upon receipt and sent to assigned program officer.
- (7) Proposals are reviewed for both substantive content and budget by program staff to screen for compliance to program guidelines and to identify errors in budget computations or other inconsistencies.
- (8) Project Coordinator prepares an analysis of proposal(s) submitted for Advisory Committee review based on adherence to concept paper guidelines, methodology, creativity, "balance" and other Charter requirements, geographic diversity, institutions' past performance and budget.
- (9) Advisory Committee reviews proposals based on adherence to project concept guidelines and criteria checklist instruction. (Attachment A)
- (10) Minutes of Advisory Committee's recommendations and suggestions to enhance proposals are submitted to the Office Director.
- (11) Following approval, conditions and/or modifications are worked out with the institution.
- (12) Files on projects that will result in new grants or amendments to existing grants are sent to the Bureau Grants Coordinator and Grants Division for final processing; progress of grant package is tracked.
- (13) When grant is finally awarded, Project Coordinator is responsible for monitoring program agency compliance and implementation of approved cooperative agreement.
- (14) At conclusion of multi-regional or regional projects a substantive report is written by escorts, program agency and program officer evaluating the program. Recommendations for future projects should be part of the report.
- (15) Evaluation reports are sent to participating posts.